

**PITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA  
MAY 18, 1999**

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners met in a workshop session meeting on Tuesday, May 18, 1999, at 8:30 a.m. in the Emergency Operations Center conference room, Pitt County Office Building, Greenville, North Carolina with the following commissioners present:

Eugene James, Chairman  
Glenn Bowen, Commissioner  
Charles P. Gaskins, Commissioner  
David Hammond, Commissioner  
Thomas H. Johnson, Commissioner  
Mark W. Owens, Jr., Commissioner  
M. Theresa Shank, Commissioner  
Beth B. Ward, Commissioner

Absent:

Jeffrey E. Savage, Vice Chairman

Also present were:

Thomas B. Robinson, County Manager  
JoAnne Burgdorff, County Attorney  
Susan J. Banks, Clerk to the Board  
Arlen Holt, PIO and Cable Coordinator  
John K. Bulow, Assistant Manager  
Melonie Bryan, Director of Financial Services

**Call to Order** and welcome by Chairman James.

The Invocation was given by Commissioner Johnson.  
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Bowen.

**Approval of Agenda**

**UPON MOTION** by Commissioner Shank, seconded by Commissioner Bowen, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Chairman James stated that at 11:30 a.m. he would have to leave for a planning and zoning meeting this morning.

Commissioner Bowen suggested that since the Vice Chairman would not be present during this time either, Commissioner Owens act as chairman during that time. There was no objection.

Mr. Robinson reviewed the agenda for this meeting and provided the Board with a detailed budget. He reviewed major accomplishments for the County during Fiscal Year 1998-1999. Chairman James stated that he wanted a report on the tax audit on businesses. Mr. Robinson stated he would talk with Mr. Jimmie Hardee, Tax Administrator, about getting a report.

Commissioner Shank stated that she felt the County should have a dedicated page in the newspaper to get information out to the public.

Mr. Robinson reviewed the major objectives for FY 1999-2000. Ms. Shank asked that the Board's goals from the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting be included in these objectives. Mr. Robinson stated he would have to amend the objectives.

Commissioner Gaskins arrived at this time.

Mr. Robinson reviewed the major budget changes. He highlighted an increase of \$2.7 million or 7.95% of ad valorem tax base.

Chairman James stated that the shell building in Farmville had not been sold and there needed to be some movement on this building. He stated that the County needs to do something to sell the Farmville shell building. Mr. Robinson noted that the County is also showing a 16.7% increase in sales tax revenue because of the special census which will help cut down on use of fund balance. He stated that they are continuing to work on improvements to the Mental Health program. He continued his review of major budget changes. Mr. Robinson presented the Board with the Manager's draft budget for 1999-2000 fiscal year.

He stated that 50.9 positions were requested, but the Manager's recommendation was to fill 18.50 positions. He stated that all but four of the eighteen positions recommended were in Social Services or the Sheriff's Department. Ms. Burgdorff stated that they have looked into privatization of the Child Support collection program but it has been shown that there are problems with the outside agencies providing these services. Chairman James said he wants information from the managers of the counties that have privatized these services.

Mr. Robinson said that he has a concern that the Mental Health Center staff has not requested any replacement vehicles because the cost would be \$195,500 if they followed the County's vehicle replacement policy. He stated that they have not requested them because they do not feel they can afford them at this time.

Mr. Robinson discussed the funding for the libraries with the Board.

Ms. Melonie Bryan reviewed the proposed Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 1999 through 2004. Commissioner Shank said that the schools information for capital improvement projects was insufficient. Mr. Robinson said that the \$48,000,000 for schools capital improvement projects may need to be spread out but it was budgeted in one year for a bond issue. Commissioner Owens asked that the information be spread among the years instead of lumped in one year as a bond order.

Ms. Bryan also presented a Financial Plan with future budget projections and assumptions where the budget is balanced without a tax increase for the next two years.

### **Social Services - Ed Garrison**

Mr. Garrison reviewed the Work First program and reported that 1,000 people went to work through this program. He informed the Board that the Electronic Benefit Transfer program has been implemented and has been found to be very beneficial. The Health Choice program has been implemented and been very successful. He stated that they are on target and beginning to help many people. Mr. Garrison said he had seventeen new Social Worker III positions approved in January 1998. He discussed the five major goals for this year which also included the Work First, transportation, and others.

Mr. Garrison said he asked for ten (10) additional positions. The Manager proposed five Adult Social Workers. Mr. Garrison said he was appealing to the Board for more staff in the child support enforcement program. He asked for the Board's help by allocating more positions.

Commissioner Bowen asked what percentage of the Social Services budget is local county funds? Mr. Robinson responded that 38% of Social Services budget is County funds. Mr. Garrison also asked for additional office space for the additional staff.

### **Sheriff's Department Request - Sheriff Mac Manning**

Sheriff Manning stated that he needed additional deputies for staffing of the new annex of the courthouse. He noted that the Governor will be appointing a new district court judge for this area which also means additional courts. He stated that there would also be additional courthouse security needed to staff the electrical scanner, possible video monitoring, and other needs. He proposed a need for six new officers to help on a part-time basis and the Manager reduced it to two positions and cut out the part-time money. He said that there would be better utilization of the staff as part-time court officers. He expressed that the courts are very inconsistent and it is hard to judge the needs. He said he needed part-time instead of full time officers. Sheriff Manning said the Manager's recommendation will not be adequate to staff the security for the courthouse.

Sheriff Manning also stated that he requested a telecommunicator position, which Mr. Robinson did not fund. He said the need was for two telecommunicators for law enforcement dispatching because they also do some dispatching for the municipalities. In addition, he noted that if the Child Support Enforcement section is increased then that will mean an increase in officers workload for service of process.

Sheriff Manning stated that a Crime Prevention Program is needed in Pitt County. They have started community watch programs but there is only one officer working in this area and the demand is sufficient for an additional officer. Sheriff Manning spoke about a need for new uniforms which the manager cut from the budget. He said the shirts the officers are currently wearing will no longer be available. The current polywool blend uniforms will last longer, are more versatile and the current shirts can be very hot. The Sheriff also stated that the undercover officers that wear plain clothes have no uniforms and in event of a natural disaster they need all sworn officers to be able to be in uniform. He stated that the ID lab was shut down because of malfunctioning and they need \$15,000 to \$20,000 to buy a self contained fume hood. He stated it could be moved to another location. Sheriff Manning also requested extra training funds. The officers need to be trained to speak conversational Spanish. He said they are trying to recruit bi-lingual officers because the law requires officers to inform people of their rights regardless of their language. He has met with a Spanish instructor about an ongoing course in conversational Spanish.

Sheriff Manning discussed salaries that are lagging behind other law enforcement agencies. He stated that Pitt County is competing with the state highway patrol, ECU security, City of Greenville, and that there are not a lot of qualified applicants and the competition is tough.

### **Detention Center**

Sheriff Manning noted that there is a serious need for additional blankets and sheets as well as underwear for the inmates. He stated that the inmates are presently only issued two clean pair of underwear per week.

Staffing needs requested were for additional nursing coverage so they can have 24 hour coverage. He stated that this would actually save money.

Sheriff Manning said the Detention Center will exceed \$2.4 million this year. He informed the Board that the federal population is on the decline but it will come back up. He stated that this is a normal curve in population.

He requested an additional \$12,000 to issue clean underwear every day. He said he would like to issue one blanket to each inmate. He stated that there would be between \$100,000 to \$120,000 left over this year in the jail medical budget because they have increased their staffing and have not had to expend great amounts of money on medical care. He said they are dealing with an increase in tuberculosis. Officers are having to assist with medical needs of inmates. Commissioners followed up with questions about the Detention Center and Sheriff's Department requests.

Chairman James left at this time, 11:30 a.m.

Sheriff Manning said they are paying for things that were not paid for in the past, such as deputies being brought in for briefing early on their shifts. He stated that a bailiff needs to be placed in the small claims court. He stated that he still needs six officers and some part time money for busy days versus the two officers which Mr. Robinson has proposed.

Mr. Robinson said new money being requested was \$2.0 million.

### **Emergency Services - Bobby Joyner**

Mr. Joyner requested an additional employee. He stated they are writing new policies and plans regularly and the computer work has increased significantly. Mr. Joyner gave several examples about matters which his office is handling on a regular basis, such as providing information on water hydrants on blocks, gathering plans on buildings in county for emergency needs and others. He said they are also required by law to handle hazardous materials and that area will be eligible for grant money. He asked the Board to reconsider his request for an additional employee, which Mr. Robinson did not put it in the budget.

Mr. Joyner also asked for radio equipment money. He said the current system is thirty-five years old and he hoped that it could be replaced because they can not get parts for it anymore.

Commissioner Johnson asked about the annual amounts for fire/rescue and raising reimbursement rates per call. He stated that he had heard that some squads feel they are being penalized. Commissioner Johnson suggested this be reconsidered.

Mr. Robinson said that the study for rescue should be completed in July and at that time the Board could implement a user fee or raise a tax and set aside the allocation.

Mr. Joyner said that a user fee is the fairest way to do this but it may meet with some resistance from the rescue departments. He stated that \$300 per call would generate \$1.8 million with only a fifty percent (50%) collection rate. It would require one person to implement the collections.

Commissioner Ward said that she felt the user fee was the most reasonable way to raise revenues for these departments.

Mr. Joyner said there are 25 departments with 17 having tax districts. He said that a countywide tax is an option. Mr. Robinson said from staff's perspective, the countywide tax is the easiest and fairest way to go.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Banks, CMC

Clerk to the Board